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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 000244

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SUBJECT: NINEWA/MOSUL EXPLOSION: CURFEW LIFTED, MARKETS  
OPEN; PM'S REPRESENTATIVE BRINGS COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS

REF: A) 07 BAGHDAD 2723 B) 07 BAGHDAD 2827

Classified By: NINEWA PRT LEADER JASON HYLAND: 1.4 (B) AND (D)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

Summary

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11. (C/REL ACGU) On January 26 Ninewa Governor Kashmoula lifted the all-day curfew imposed on Mosul after the massive explosion of January 23. Shops and markets are open. PRT Leader met January 27 with the Governor, Vice-Governor, other provincial officials, and Zuhair Al-Chalabi, the Director General in the Prime Minister's Office who handles emergency follow-up. Al-Chalabi said that they had already begun distributing martyr payments from the evening of January 26 to victims of the explosion, and were about to hold a press event to continue the distribution. Al-Chalabi made clear that the Prime Minister was well aware of the importance of quick central government follow-up to this tragedy. He said that further emergency support would follow once the Cabinet officially declared Mosul a disaster area. Vice Governor Khasro Goran said that the official casualty toll now stood at 38 dead and 234 wounded. The vast majority of the casualties were handled by the Iraqi hospital system. The PRT, through USAID-funded International Medical Corps (IMC), provided rapid response assistance to the hospitals. Relief efforts are well underway, with provincial Iraqi institutions firmly in the lead. Turkish Consulate General Mosul, working with PRT and Coalition Forces, arranged for emergency delivery of 13 tons of medical supplies as well as the medical evacuation of six seriously wounded victims of the attack. Even in the middle of responding to a humanitarian crisis, Al-Chalabi and the provincial leadership were focused on the political divide between Kurds and Sunni Arabs, and efforts to exploit it - highlighting the fear that ethnic tension will cause the situation in Mosul to worsen. END SUMMARY.

Compensation Payments Have Begun

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12. (C/REL ACGU) PRT Leader met January 27 with the Ninewa Governor, Vice Governor Khasro Goran, other provincial officials, and Zuhair Al-Chalabi, the Director General in the Prime Minister's Office who handles emergency follow-up. Al-Chalabi said that they had already begun distributing martyr payments from the evening of January 26 to victims of the explosion, and were about to hold a press event to

continue the distribution. The payments were one million Iraqi Dinar (ID) for wounded persons and two million ID for families of those killed in the blast. Al-Chalabi made clear that the Prime Minister was well aware of the importance of quick central government follow-up to the tragedy. He pointed out that the Prime Minister's senior official in charge of martyr payments had accompanied him to this meeting, a sign that the Prime Minister was serious about helping out in this crisis. He said that further emergency support would follow once the Cabinet officially declared Mosul a disaster area. Both Al-Chalabi and the Governor told PRT Leader that they intended to follow the model used after the August 14 bombings in Sinjar (ref a), and would set up a committee to administer reconstruction aid to the affected community. Both Al-Chalabi and the Governor also stressed that they intended to ensure that victims of other terrorist attacks in the province also received compensation due them. Major General Wathiq, the previous Provincial Director of Police, was also at the meeting, demonstrating that he was back on the job as interim chief after the January 24 killing of his successor.

#### Curfew Lifted: Normalcy Returning

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13. (C/REL AGCU) On January 26 Ninewa Governor Duraid Kashmoula lifted the full curfew imposed on Mosul after the massive explosion of January 23. Shops and markets are open for business as usual. More telling is the fact that the Governor, Vice Governor, and Prime Minister's Representative were planning to walk outside to the market after the meeting in order to demonstrate that conditions were returning to normal.

BAGHDAD 00000244 002 OF 003

#### Casualty Toll Increases as Relief Efforts Continue

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14. (C/REL AGCU) Vice Governor Goran said that the official casualty toll now stood at 38 dead and 234 wounded. (Note: Al Chalabi told us that they had only brought enough cash to cover the payments for the 38 dead and about 170 of the injured; they will provide compensation to the remaining victims shortly.) The vast majority of the casualties were handled by the Iraqi hospital system. The PRT, through USAID-funded International Medical Corps (IMC), provided extensive rapid response assistance to the hospitals. In both a substantive and symbolic move on the evening of January 25, the Turkish Consulate General for Mosul arranged for emergency delivery of 13 tons of medical supplies as well as for the medical evacuation of six seriously wounded victims of the attack. This was possible through close cooperation among the PRT, Turkish Consulate General, Coalition Forces (CF) and our Iraqi partners.

#### All Seem Well Aware of Political Stakes

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15. (C/REL AGCU) When asked how the province was responding after the explosion, the Vice Governor said that this was not the worst attack that they have suffered, and it won't be the last. All of the leaders present realized that the speed and size of the response to this crisis would be a measuring stick that the people of Ninewa would use to measure the effectiveness of the central and provincial governments. PRT Leader asked if the Provincial Council had any authority to reprogram money from the 2007 provincial capital budget for emergencies. The Governor said that such spending was not allowed. Al Chalabi added that the provincial government manages its ordinary budget, and that it was the responsibility of the central government to provide assistance in emergencies.

#### Great Sensitivity About "Kurdish Issue" in Provincial Rule

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¶6. (C/REL AGCU) Al-Chalabi, the Governor and Vice Governor engaged in an animated defense of the Ninewa provincial government, citing criticism by Council of Representative (COR) members in Baghdad that the Provincial Council consisted almost entirely of Kurds. In return, Al-Chalabi called the COR delegation that represented Ninewa useless, charging it did not play the role that other parliamentarians did in lobbying for their provinces. The Vice Governor went through a detailed run-down of the ethnic make-up of the Provincial Council, stressing that there were relatively few ethnic Kurds represented. (NOTE: Regardless of the ethnic make-up of the Provincial Council, the Kurds hold overwhelming control over the Council, in addition to having Governor Kashmoula, a Sunni Arab, representing their interests. End Note.) He also said that the provincial government should not be blamed for the result of the Sunni Arab boycott of the 2005 elections. Al-Chalabi said that, in a democracy, this issue should be resolved at the ballot box, and those who oppose the current provincial government should not weaken its ability to govern, but instead wait for their turn in the next elections. (Comment: It is telling that in the middle of responding to this crisis, these provincial leaders, along with the Prime Minister's advisor, were focused on the Kurdish face of the province, clearly a highly sensitive point in the Sunni Arab-majority Ninewa. End Comment.) PRT Leader emphasized that the best thing that the central government and province can do at this point is to provide immediate and effective aid to show that the government is looking after the people.

#### Media Campaign Continues

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¶7. (SBU) The Governor repeatedly condemned the attack as the work of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and promised swift security and relief operations. Governor told PRT Leader that many citizens already know the truth of what happened January 23 and more and more will learn every day. (NOTE: However, according to a PRT staffer based in the city of Mosul, many citizens still believe that Iraqi security forces were somehow behind the blast. She added that there was widespread fear and anticipation of a major security offensive in Mosul. End Note.) PM Maliki called Mosul "the

BAGHDAD 00000244 003.2 OF 003

final fight." The Minister of Defense (MOD) came to Mosul January 26 and at a press conference promised a "decisive end" to "terrorist activities." Provincial Director Generals are quoted in the local media as saying essential services, such as water, have been restored to the affected area.

#### Turkey/U.S. Humanitarian Cooperation

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¶8. (SBU) USAID-funded IMC delivered badly needed medical supplies to local area hospitals. MOH officials expressed deep gratitude for all the assistance. In an innovative example of trilateral cooperation, barely 48 hours after the attack, Turkish Consulate General Mosul arranged for an elite Turkish relief team to fly to the Coalition base in Mosul in a plane loaded with replacement medical supplies, valued at about \$125,000 according to the Consul General. The plane was also configured as an air ambulance. Through the efforts of the Turkish Consulate General, the PRT, Coalition Forces, and Iraqi partners, six seriously wounded victims were transported from local hospitals to the CF base where they were flown to Turkey for medical treatment courtesy of the GOT.

#### Comment

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¶9. (C/REL AGCU) The central GOI, along with the provincial government leadership, has so far responded quickly to the January 23 bombing. The speed in which payments have been

meted out and the public nature of the discussion show that the Iraqi officials recognize the stakes. One key indicator of sustained engagement will be how quickly the GOI provides long-term reconstruction aid to the affected area. PRT will continue to work closely with the provincial government to ensure that future efforts to rebuild moves forward.

¶10. (C/REL AGCU) It is important to note that, even in the middle of responding to a humanitarian crisis, Al-Chalabi and the provincial leadership were focused on the political divide between Kurds and Sunni Arabs, and efforts to exploit it. A lengthy discussion of the ineffectiveness of the Sunni members of the COR from Mosul, coupled with a long explanation from Goran (also the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Ninewa) about the ethnic makeup of the Provincial Council, highlighted the fear that ethnic tensions will cause the situation in Mosul to worsen. All actors in the January 27 meeting stressed the need to work together to avoid such an outcome. The PRT will encourage such political reconciliation and cooperation in our ongoing outreach and meetings with all parties.

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